

When General Washington directed the creation of the Badge of Military Merit specifically to honor our lower-ranking soldiers, he demonstrated a philosophy unheard of in contemporary Europe, which reserved military honors for officers and members of the nobility. Thus, our Nation's first military award recognized the spirit of voluntarism and selfless dedication of the average American which has been so fundamental to the American way of life ever since.

After the Revolutionary War, the Purple Heart fell into disuse but was revived in 1932 by President Herbert Hoover as an award to be presented to Army personnel who were wounded or killed in combat against an enemy of the United States. It later was authorized for Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard personnel, and, now, all armed services personnel as well as certain civilian nationals are eligible to receive it.

Countless Americans have been wounded in combat while defending our great Nation against armed enemies. Because of the nature of their injuries, these Purple Heart recipients bear their battle wounds for life. Many more have made the supreme sacrifice, giving their lives for their country.

It is most fitting that this special group of veterans be recognized for their outstanding contributions to our Nation's security. It is also most fitting that we recognize the bicentennial anniversary of the creation of the Purple Heart and the fiftieth anniversary of its reestablishment as well as the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Ante, p. 247.

The Congress, by House Joint Resolution 526, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in August as National Purple Heart Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning August 1, 1982, as National Purple Heart Week. I call on all Americans to join in honoring Purple Heart recipients who have served and those who will serve our Nation with distinction.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 30th day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 4956 of July 30, 1982

National Hispanic Heritage Week, 1982

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

Hispanic men and women have played a vital role in the development and progress of the United States, opening new frontiers and establishing missions and settlements that were the forerunners of some of our most important and thriving urban and cultural centers. Across the southern regions of our great country, from Florida to California, Hispanic explorers, pioneers, and settlers have helped to shape this vast land.

Since the time of our Revolution, when U.S. leaders shared with leaders in Latin America the common struggle of lifting the bonds of colonial rule, through the present, peoples of the Americas have shared great democratic ideals. In the words of Benito Juarez, a contemporary of Abraham Lincoln, "Respect for the rights of others, between individuals, as between nations, is the basis of peace." These words convey the essence of our laws and values, preserving the dignity and equality of all our people.

Hispanics continue to make significant and enduring contributions to our society, enriching us intellectually, spiritually, and culturally.

In times of peace, the accomplishments of these Americans in science, technology, politics, the arts, and other important fields have greatly enhanced our way of life. In times of war, Hispanic Americans have defended our nation with pride and courage. Thirty-nine of them have received the Medal of Honor, America's highest military decoration. This is a higher proportion of such heroes than in any other group, and we salute their sacrifices and bravery.

As did earlier decades, the 1980's present Hispanic Americans with new opportunities to pursue their goals and advance our society. Like those before them today's Hispanic Americans meet their challenges and responsibilities with dignity and a creative spirit. Their energetic commitment to hard work and their determination to participate fully in the American Dream bring strength and inspiration to us all.

The Congress, by joint resolution approved September 17, 1968 (82 Stat. 848), authorized and requested the President to proclaim the week which includes September 15 and 16 as National Hispanic Heritage Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning September 12, 1982, as National Hispanic Heritage Week in honor of Hispanic men and women. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials to observe the proud history of Hispanic peoples. I ask all Americans to join together in peace, brotherhood, and pride in being one Nation under God.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 30th day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 4957 of August 4, 1982

Working Mothers' Day

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Over the past half century a great change has been taking place in the social and economic structure of the United States: mothers are joining the labor force in ever-increasing numbers. At the present time, over half of all the children in America have mothers who work outside the home.

Over forty-three million women are now employed in every area of public and private employment and are continuing to develop new opportunities. They have made, and continue to make, increasingly important contributions to the Nation.